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P 051102Z MAR 08
FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8945
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES PRIORITY
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 2467
RUEHBL/AMCONSUL BELFAST PRIORITY 0692
RHMFISS/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 000109

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR IVAN WEINSTEIN (EUR/PGI) AND PEGGY WALKER (EUR/ERA)
DHS FOR MIKE SCARDAVILLE (OIA) AND MARC FREY (VWPO)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/05/2018

TAGS: [CMGT](#) [CVIS](#) [EUN](#) [KJUS](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [EI](#)

SUBJECT: VISA WAIVER PROGRAM NEGOTIATIONS AND THE EU - THE
IRISH PERSPECTIVE

REF: STATE 21769

Classified By: Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Ted Pierce; Reasons 1.4 (B
) and (D).

11. (U) On March 4, Cons Chief met with Irish Assistant
Secretary for Consular Affairs Ray Bassett and Joe Hackett of

SIPDIS

the Irish Passport Office to deliver the demarche mentioned
in reftel. Bassett was pleased to receive the information
presented in the demarche and stated that he believed that
the U.S.-Irish relationship with regard to visa-free travel
was a strong one, and that he looked forward to working with
us to keep it that way.

12. (C) Bassett stated that they have been following the MOU
negotiations with the Czech Republic very closely. He said
that they are in full sympathy with the Czech position and
would oppose any sanctions by the EU against the Czech
Republic for its signing of the MOU with the United States.
He said while there were a few &Europeanist8 members of the
government that wished Ireland would stand more united with
the EU Commission in this regard, the bulk of the government,
including the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Justice, is
fully committed to the bilateral approach to working out a
viable agreement with the United States on VWP travel
requirements.

13. (C) At the same time, Bassett stated that Ireland does not
want to openly break ranks with the EU on this issue but to
quietly wait and see what develops within the EU as the new
accession states work out their own agreements with the
United States. Bassett implied that this breaking of ranks
by those states with the most to gain from a new agreement
with the United States will leave the EU Commission with a
fait accompli that will give space to other countries to
quietly work out their own arrangements with the United
States. He said that Ireland would eventually like a full
bilateral agreement that covers as many areas as possible
where Ireland retains competency under EU rules.

14. (SBU) Bassett added that while they have no objection in
principle to a united EU front in negotiations with the
United States, they fully understand the bilateral nature of
any future VWP agreement. In addition, they would oppose any
united EU position that would limit any member state's
currently existing rights.

15. (C) Incidentally, Bassett mentioned to Cons Chief that,
only minutes before his arrival, he had received a communique

from the EU asking member governments to refrain from meeting with their American counterparts on this issue prior to March 12th. Bassett took the view that it was too late to give that communication any consideration.

¶6. (U) Comment: With an estimated one in seven Irish citizens visiting the United States each year, Ireland is fully committed to maintaining its good VWP relationship with the U.S. and will do all it can legitimately do to strengthen and maintain that relationship as it has in the past. End comment.

FOLEY